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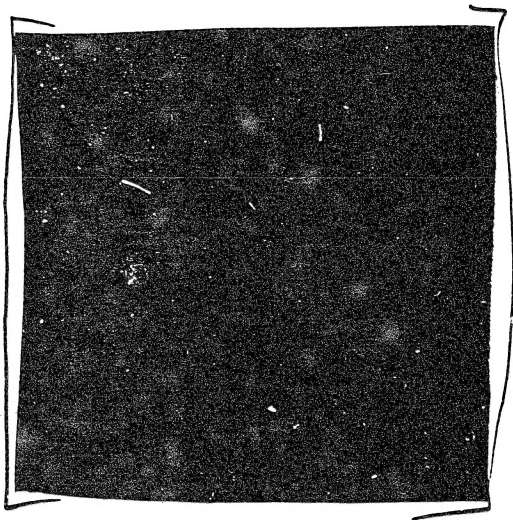
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

NUMBER 85-63

Situation and Prospects in Cuba

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NIE 85-63  
14 June 1963

## NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE

NUMBER 85-63

(Supersedes NIE 85-2-62 and SNIE 85-3-62;  
Supplements SNIE 85-4-62)

# Situation and Prospects in Cuba

*Submitted by the*  
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE  
*Concurred in by the*  
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD  
*As indicated overall*  
14 JUNE 1963

APPROVED FOR RELEASE  
DATE 6 FEB 1965

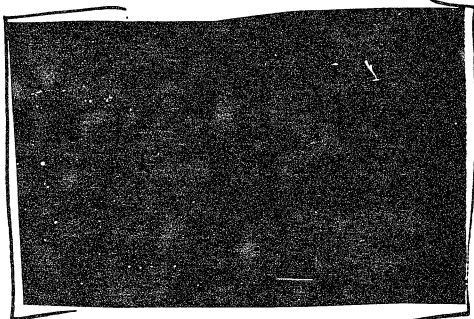
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Nº 425



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## SITUATION AND PROSPECTS IN CUBA

### CONCLUSIONS

A. After a period marked by bitterness on Castro's part and by restraint on the part of the Soviets, the two parties now appear to have agreed to emphasize the consolidation of the Castro regime. We believe that the current situation within Cuba favors this consolidation. The mere passage of time tends to favor Castro as Cubans and others become accustomed to the idea that he is here to stay and as his regime gains in experience. It is unlikely that internal political opposition or economic difficulties will cause the regime to collapse.

[REDACTED]

B. Dependence on the person of Castro is, however, a major vulnerability of the regime.

[REDACTED]

But his death could result in one form of disorder or another ranging from power struggles within the regime's leadership to open civil war. Any successor is likely to be more dependent upon the Soviets than Castro has been because he will lack Castro's ability to command the loyalty of substantial numbers of Cubans. Furthermore, even under the most favorable circumstances, any opposition would have to have the support of a large part of the military before it could hope to overthrow the Communist regime, and would have to take account of the presence of Soviet troops.

[REDACTED]

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C.

The Soviet military picture in Cuba is in transition with a scaling down of their forces becoming apparent. The total Soviet military strength in Cuba is now estimated to be about [REDACTED] but we cannot exclude the possibility that there could be several thousand more. The Soviets remain in control of the key weapons systems, while training the Cubans to operate some of them. We believe the Soviets have told the Cubans that they intend eventually to turn various weapons systems over to them.

D.

E. The capabilities of the Cuban Armed Forces have been augmented by increased training, new equipment, and some reorganization.

F.

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[REDACTED]

G. The joint Khrushchev-Castro communique held up Cuba as an example for the rest of Latin America, but without endorsing Castro's earlier general incitement to revolution throughout the area. Castro probably still believes that revolution will come only through violence, but the regime's exhortations on the subject have been muted recently. The outlook is for a mixture of tactics.

[REDACTED]

The Soviets will continue with the more traditional efforts at penetration through diplomacy and economic overtures. In general, we believe that situations are unlikely to develop in which Castro could intervene with substantial force without rendering himself vulnerable to US or OAS counteraction.

[REDACTED]

H. While the Soviets and Cubans have probably resolved their more immediate problems we foresee varying degrees of friction in their future relations, particularly over the long run. They probably have not reached a fundamental reconciliation of their appraisals of the situation in Latin America, and Castro appears to insist on a unique position in the Bloc without submitting to the discipline and control imposed on Soviet Satellites. Nevertheless, Castro has taken a long step toward the Soviet side in the Sino-Soviet controversy.

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## DISCUSSION


### I. CURRENT SITUATION

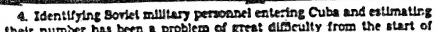
1. Significant policy differences between Castro and the Soviet leaders were apparent during the missile base crisis of October 1962 and for three or four months afterwards.




#### *Military Situation*

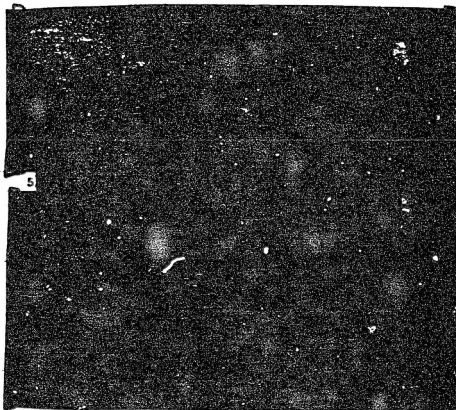
2.  The Soviets remain in control of the key weapons systems, while training the Cubans to operate most of them. The limited capabilities of the Cuban Armed Forces are gradually improving as a result of their experience and increased training since last fall and their growing familiarity with Soviet equipment.



3.   
4. Identifying Soviet military personnel entering Cuba and estimating their number has been a problem of great difficulty from the start of the buildup in 1962.



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5  
6. We believe that there has been a reduction in the Soviet personnel at the four armored camps. Some Cuban military personnel are present and undergoing training at all four of the camps, and a reliable report presents good evidence that one has been evacuated by the Soviets and partially occupied by the Cubans. However, the equipment remains at all the camps.

7. Four full shiploads of military equipment have been identified coming into Cuba since the crisis as against some 100 which arrived between July and October 1962.

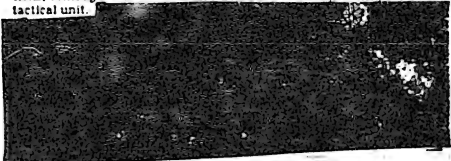



8. *Cuban Forces and Capabilities.* The numerical strength of the Cuban ground forces has been estimated at 175,000, of whom some 75,000 are in the standing army and 100,000 in the ready reserve. In addition there are some 100,000 home-guard militiamen, of little combat signifi-


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cance but useful as a police reserve. The capabilities of the standing army and ready reserve have been enhanced by new equipment, and by further training and experience including the mobilization during the missile crisis. A few divisions may now be capable of tactical operations, although the battalion combat team remains generally the basic tactical unit.



9. The Cuban Navy is estimated to number  men. Its capabilities have been enhanced by the provision of Soviet equipment, principally motor torpedo boats and submarine chasers, and by increased training in its use.



10. In the field of air defense the Cuban Air Force has a small but increasing role.



11



12. *Training of Cubans:* The reduction in Soviet military personnel in Cuba since February has been accompanied by increasing indications of Cubans training in the operation of Soviet equipment and systems, which suggests that the Soviets plan a turnover of part or all of these systems to the Cubans.

13. Cuban pilots are flying the MIG-21 aircraft, which are equipped with air-to-air missiles, and some will soon be able to fly them operationally. One class of 22 pilots began training in March 1963, and a second of about the same size is scheduled to begin in September; Cubans are also almost certainly being trained in ground control and maintenance.

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The Cuban Air Force could man the MIG-21 system by mid-1964.

Cubans are being trained at a number of sites in the operation and maintenance of Soviet ground equipment.

14. We believe that Cubans are also being trained on the surface-to-air missile (SAM) system and may soon begin to operate some equipment at a few sites on a routine basis.

#### *Political Stability*

15. All our evidence points to the complete political predominance of Fidel. To an important extent the forward drive of the Cuban revolution depends on Castro's charismatic appeal. His personal indispensability has enabled him to surmount both a challenge from old-line Communists in Cuba and a crisis in his relations with Moscow. It has also enabled him to absorb some economic setbacks without serious risk to his regime.

16.

The completion of this party organization might provide Castro with another means of control and an important instrument for political indoctrination and exhortation of the populace.

17.

Resistance continues, but it is on a small scale and is ineffective against the regime's security forces.

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*The Economic Situation*

18. The Cuban economy declined sharply during 1960-1962, and there is almost certain to be some further decline in output during 1963. Nevertheless, the Cuban economic situation is not a critical source of weakness for the Castro regime and is unlikely to become one.

19. The decline in Cuban production has been partially offset by the substantial volume of economic assistance from the Bloc, particularly the USSR.

As a result of Bloc assistance, Cuban imports rose substantially in 1962, in spite of a sizable decline in export earnings. Whatever the level of Cuban export earnings in 1963, Bloc assistance probably will permit the maintenance of essential imports—foodstuffs, fuels, industrial materials, and machine parts—~~at~~ about the 1962 level. Meanwhile the political effects of economic decline have been mitigated by the radical change in the pattern of distribution of available consumer goods and services.

20. Cuba's production of sugar has declined in 1963 and its volume of exports probably will be more than one-third below that of 1962. On the other hand, the impact of reduced supplies will be largely, and perhaps more than completely, offset by the sharp rise of world sugar prices to the highest levels in many years.

We cannot predict how much foreign currency this will produce, however, because prices may vary, greatly depending on the date and terms of the sales, some of which were made before the sharp rise in prices.

21. The Soviets agreed during the Castro visit that they would pay six cents a pound instead of the four cent price which they paid last year and which had been the contract price for this year's shipments.

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22. The Soviets have thus removed a major irritant in the Soviet-Cuban relationship caused by the great rise in world sugar prices. They did this at a reasonable cost. In fact, the two cent differential will go to pay part of Cuba's accrued debt to the Soviets, so that the granting of a higher price represents only a juggling of barter and credit accounts and will not reduce Cuba's need for continued large Soviet balance of payments support this year.

23. In spite of Bloc economic assistance, total personal consumption in Cuba has fallen sharply since 1958-1959, perhaps by as much as one-fifth, although this decline in personal consumption under Castro is partly accounted for by the emigration and impoverishment of the former wealthy and middle classes. Rationing and other distributional controls have fostered a more even distribution of the declining totals of goods and services.

24. There are, nevertheless, many among the lower classes who are worse off than during the pre-Castro period; organized labor in particular has lost much of the wage differentials and other substantial benefits previously obtained. Workers and peasants generally probably are disappointed that the economic improvements expected under Castro have not materialized.

considerable economic discontent in Cuba is reflected in worker apathy, absenteeism, and non-cooperation. These traits have traditionally been manifested by Cuban workers, however; and there has been little evidence so far of more dramatic forms of antiregime activity because of economic discontent.

25. Apathy and noncooperation, nevertheless, do impede Castro's efforts toward economic recovery. So far, Castro has relied on exhortation and on reward for outstanding workers as means of increasing worker effort, but with relatively little success. Should Castro turn to harsh administrative measures to get the Cubans to work harder—and initial steps toward the introduction of work norms have already been taken—there very likely would be an exacerbation of the problem of worker discontent.

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#### Castro and Latin America

26. Those Latin Americans, Communists and non-Communists, who are committed to violent revolution continue to look to Castro for help, particularly from his training program in Cuba (1,000-1,500 Latin Americans received Communist indoctrination or training in guerrilla warfare in 1962) and his large-scale dissemination of printed and broadcast propaganda. At this time, pro-Castro revolutionaries are persistently active and aggressive only in Venezuela, Castro's priority target for revolution in Latin America. On balance, the revolutionaries have lost ground in recent months in their efforts to weaken the Betancourt government through terrorism and sabotage. There is strong sentiment among old-line leaders of the Communist Party of Venezuela for putting more emphasis on recruitment of peasant support and on guerrilla tactics in rural areas as the best means of promoting a successful revolution over the long term.

[REDACTED] In several other countries there have been preparations for violent activity, and in Peru and Ecuador some incidents of violence by pro-Castro revolutionaries.

27. The sense of urgency created throughout Latin America by the missile base crisis has faded, but a considerable residue remains, especially in Central America. Soviet military intrusion into the Western Hemisphere, Soviet exploitation of the Cuban revolution for its own strategic purposes, and Castro's subordination to the USSR were all made strikingly clear to governments as well as to politically-conscious elements of the population.

28. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Moreover, the crisis caused moderate center and conservative groups, by and large already anti-Castro, to be more aware than before of the fundamental aims of the USSR in this hemisphere and of the threat posed by Cuba as an operational base for the Soviets.

29. Among the small countries of Central America the crisis heightened pressures for a definite solution to the Cuban problem. They have

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intensified their efforts to control and combat subversive activities.

[REDACTED]

30.

## II. OUTLOOK

### *Shorter Term Prospects*

31. We believe that Castro and the Soviets are probably convinced that time can be made to work in Cuba's favor, providing the US is not presented with a pretext for direct intervention or drastic measures such as some form of quarantine.

[REDACTED]

In short, the USSR and Cuba probably intend to play for time, avoid provocations likely to lead to US intervention, withhold unnecessary concessions, and repair the damage to their prestige. Each will continue to employ flexible tactics in Latin America varied according to the political situation in particular countries. We expect that both the Soviets and Castro will adopt aggressive tactics whenever presented with tempting opportunities, and their appreciation of what constitutes a tempting opportunity will probably differ as time passes.

32. If we assume no major circumstantial changes,

[REDACTED]

we would expect the Castro regime to be more firmly established a year hence than it is today. We believe it unlikely that economic difficulties or internal political opposition will cause the collapse of the regime.

[REDACTED]

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33

34

*Military Prospects*

35. We believe the Soviets have told the Cubans that they intend eventually to turn various weapons systems over to them. This is not to say that all Soviet military personnel will be withdrawn from Cuba; indeed, it is highly likely that the Soviets will maintain a significant presence there.

36. With respect to the SAM system, we doubt that the Soviets have specified an exact date for transfer of operational control or would carry out such an agreement if subsequent developments produced new dangers. We believe that the Soviet Government remains acutely aware of the risk involved.

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[REDACTED]

37. The turnover of other weapons systems now under Soviet control would greatly increase Castro's independent military capabilities.

[REDACTED]

Although Cuban pilots, and probably ground controllers and maintenance personnel, are receiving training from the Soviets, the operational effectiveness of these aircraft will be reduced for a time by the relative inexperience of these personnel.

38. [REDACTED]

39. [REDACTED]

40. At some point the Soviets might attempt to increase their military strength in Cuba by introducing other weapons.

[REDACTED]


But in such cases they would almost certainly recognise the great risk of US counteraction.

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*Long-Run Political and Economic Prospects*

41. We believe that the current situation favors the further consolidation of Castro's Communist regime in Cuba. Security forces will probably continue to be highly effective.



42.

43. If Fidel Castro were to die, members and supporters of the regime, including the armed forces and security forces, would probably rally together to maintain the revolution and to defend it.



44. We believe that economic recovery in Cuba will be slow; it will take at least several years before the 1958 level of production is regained. There has been little noticeable improvement so far in the key areas of economic organization, managerial efficiency, and worker incentives—notable weaknesses in Bloc countries generally. Also, the Soviet Union

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probably considers assistance to Cuba in the form of balance of payments credits as an emergency measure, and it is likely that any recovery in Cuban production will be partly counterbalanced by reductions in such credits.

45. On the other hand, the Soviet Union probably is prepared to provide developmental assistance to Cuba for a prolonged period. The Soviets apparently have backed away from some of the more ambitious industrial projects talked of previously, such as a large steel plant and a petroleum refinery; but a number of more modest industrial projects are moving ahead, as are projects for expanding agricultural production and for mineral exploration.

[REDACTED]

*Latin American Policies*

46.

[REDACTED] Castro still hopes to convince dissatisfied Latin Americans that the Cuban revolution is a model for them to follow. The joint Khrushchev-Castro communique held up Cuba as an example for the rest of Latin America, but without endorsing Castro's earlier general incitement to revolution throughout the area. Castro probably still believes that revolution will come only through violence, but the regime's exhortations on the subject have been muted recently. In part, this is because of Castro's disillusionment with the lack of revolutionary fervor among Latin American Communists, with the notable exception of Venezuela. More important, he probably feels that he has no choice but to bide his time and build up subversive assets for the future. Such a position has probably been strongly urged by Moscow and leading Latin American Communists (e.g., Prestes in Brazil) who fear Castro will upset their own strategies. The tenor of the joint communique of 23 May would suggest that Castro has accepted, at least for the present, a more cautious and flexible line with respect to revolution in Latin America.

47. The outlook is for a mixture of tactics.

[REDACTED] The Soviets will continue with the more traditional efforts at penetration through diplomacy and economic overtures. [REDACTED] Subversive training and support will, of course, continue in Cuba.

[REDACTED] However, the Soviets still have predominant influence among Latin American Commu-

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nists and do not contemplate turning over their controls to Castro. Nevertheless, they have given Castro a certain weight by describing him as the forerunner of Communist advance in Latin America, and therefore his views may tend to be more influential with other Latin American Communists.

48. [REDACTED]

#### **Soviet-Cuban Relations**

49. While we believe that the Soviets and Cubans have come to grips with some of their problems and have probably resolved the more immediate ones, the Cuban situation is clouded by many uncertainties and Soviet-Cuban relations are far from permanently stabilized.

50. Castro, while in the USSR, showed a willingness to accept the Soviet line of peaceful coexistence and to recognize the Soviet Union's leadership of the Communist movement. On the other hand, some of the more sensitive points of dispute between the Chinese and the Soviets (e.g., Yugoslavia and the charges of dogmatism versus revisionism) were not mentioned in the communique of 23 May. Nevertheless, Castro did take a long step toward the Soviet side in the Sino-Soviet controversy. In turn Castro has received from the Soviets a strong boost to his own ego; assurances of continued economic support

[REDACTED] and recognition of Cuba's special importance as an example of what the revolutionary struggle can achieve in Latin America. Overall, Soviet and

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Cuban fortunes have been bound more closely together and their respective freedoms of action have been somewhat narrowed.

51. [REDACTED]

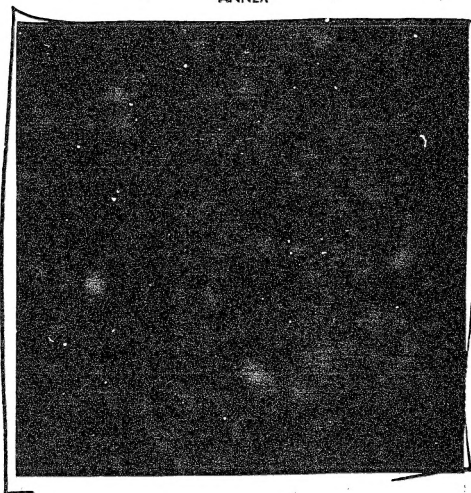
[REDACTED] Castro wants all the benefits of Soviet economic and military aid but insists upon a unique position in the Bloc without submitting to the discipline and control imposed on Soviet Satellites.

[REDACTED] The future level of Soviet economic aid to Cuba is also likely to become a bone of contention between the two countries. For the present, however, we believe that both the Soviets and the Cubans hope to stabilize the situation and gird for a long-term effort in Latin America.

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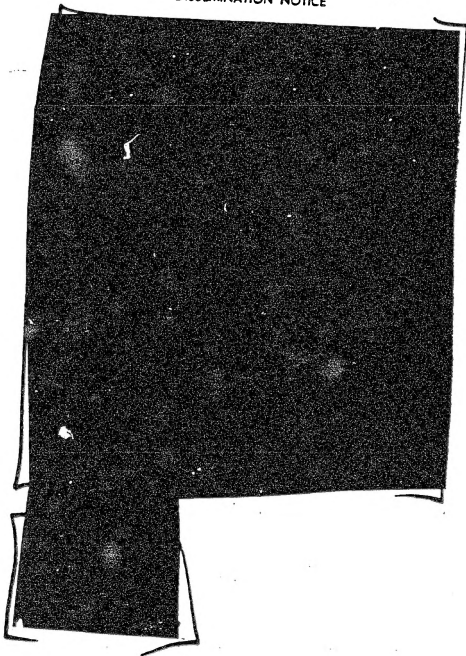
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ANNEX



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14/5-14/21

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24:1

The Cuban Missile Crisis Revisited umi 2005

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D	14/8	X	Sept 10 1963	4	5	6		X		X		X		X
E	14/9	X	Sept 23 1963	2		X		X		X		X		X
F	14/20	X	Protest Nov 1	X	X			X		X		X		X
G	14/21	X	AVERO	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	X	

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